

The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, June 30. 1691.

Quest. 1. A Child about 12 or 13 Years Old, had for a long time a very severe Ague, which brought her very low and weak, (to the best of my Knowledge, she had it about 10 Weeks) when, one day standing by the Door with her Mother, a Woman dress'd pretty Gentle came up to her, and told her she would cure the Child, provided she would follow her directions, which was promised: The next day she sends a piece of Paper sealed up, with this Order, that they should hang it about the Child's Neck, without opening or looking into it; which was done, and accordingly the Ague left the Child that very day, and it continued well for above three weeks; when a Friend coming out of the Country, would needs be so inquisitive as to see what was in the Paper, and to their amazement they found these words, Devil make her well, and take her into Hell; and that very day the Child's Ague returned again, and continued a great while after. I desire your Opinion, whether a Natural Account may be given of the Stopping and returning of the Distemper; and what to think of the Woman, as also whether the Devil hath power of curing Distempers, and whether the Devil had more power than ordinary over that child whilst those Words were about its Neck?

Answ. Paracelsus treating of Natural Magick, makes an Excursion into Characters, Charms, Spells, Incantations, the Power of Words, &c. at the last addling that the Party concern'd must always have a strong Faith that the end will be attained: Every thinking Man makes some such Conclusion, that Words, Charms, &c. are irrational, therefore not of God, and that whoever runs from their dependance from him to have Remedy elsewhere, do silently confess their Service to, and dependance on the Devil, who is the Author of every thing that is unreasonable, and when we have put our selves under the Devil's Protection, no wonder if for the Credit and Interest of his Kingdom he answers our Expectations at present, which yet will be found most of it to be but a Cheat, and a Delusion of our Senses — If it be objected, that the Child in this Instance, who also was the Subject, had no hand in it, but its Mother — We answer, Children are the Goods of their Parents, and are commonly happy or miserable, as the Parent manages 'em. We could give ye here several Instances of Parents that have wish'd the Devil would take their Children, or that they would break their Necks, or be drowned, &c. which have immediately come to pass — We doubt not at all but the Devil is Naturalist good enough to know the Cause and Cure of the Ague, and other Distempers, and when the People will make use of such a Doctor, either through Ignorance or Knowingly, 'tis no Miracle at all that we have Instances of the Effect of his Skill.

Quest. 2. whether the common Nation o'th' World be true, that these latter Ages for some Centuries past, have a less share of Learning, Judgement and Invention, than those which have preceded, because we find them deficient in finding out such advantageous Arts as their Fore-fathers have done: — If true, whether it proceeds from their Carelessness in informing their Minds, or that God did in a more especial manner Capacitate those of former Ages for the Discovery of such things as were requisite for the Necessity, Instruction, and Pleasure of all Mankind: — if false, how comes it to be the Opinion not only of Indifferent, but very Ingenious Men that it is so?

Answ. It is disputable, whether the Invention of useful Arts is infinite or not; but upon a Supposition of Truth in both Cases, I see no reason to conclude this Age comes short of the preceding Ones, as to priority in Arts and Sciences; we'll consider the first part of the Dilemma, and suppose the Invention of useful Arts infinite: if so, we must conclude (as we find by daily experience) that at length arising to be too numerous, some would be lost and supplanted by others, which would not be, if the first were more useful. — Again, if the Invention of useful Arts be finite, they can be but once invented: So that those

which have already done it, cannot pretend a Preheminence to those that follow who also would have found the same out if they had lived before, as is seen by the great Improvements daily made of what is invented: Further, 'tis a vulgar Error, that any valuable Art is of one Man's inventing; as for instance in Sailing, how many Ages passed before the Invention of Sails, or a commodious Building of Ships, or before the Compas was invented, and how long before the Invention of the Compas was the Nature of the Load-stone discovered. If we take a view of the liberal Sciences, can we believe that Aristotle's Philosophy was all his own, or rather a Compendium of what other Philosophers had writ before, and by him methodically compil'd, with some additions? As to Curious Mechanicks, as some are improved, and as the Subject is large, so some are new invented. Elian and Pliny mention one Myrmecides, that wrought out of Ivory a Chariot with four Wheels, and as many Horses, in so little room, that a little Fly might cover them all with her Wings: — As also a Ship with all the Tackling to it, no bigger than that a small Bee might cover it with her Wings. Tho these were great Curiosities, and probably of one Man's Invention, we need not seek beyond the Limits of our Island for its parallel. In the 20th Year of Q. Elizabeth, one Mark Sealiot made a Lock, consisting of eleven pieces of Iron, Steel, and Brass, all which, together with a Pipe Key to it, weighed but one Grain of Gold; he made also a Chain consisting of forty three Links, whereunto having fastened the Lock and Key before mentioned, he put the Chain about a Fleas Neck, which drew them all with ease. See the Inventions and Experiments of the Royal Society, which will abundantly convince the Querist, that our Age has as active and busie Spirits for Invention as as any former Age in the World.

Quest. 3. In what Posture and Order did our Saviour eat the Passover and his last Supper with his Disciples?

Answ. 'Twas Accubation, or a lying down upon the left side with the Head born up by the Elbow, they lay upon three Beds, placed at a convenient height, round about a Table, four upon a Bed; the Head of the second leaning upon or against the Bosom of the first, and the third against the second. The Order was thus, the Third Bed was for the Master and whom he pleased, the First and Middle were for the Guests; but here they were all Guests, and our Saviour eat only with his Disciples; so that supposing them to be in Preheminence as they are named, Matth. &c. they were placed as in the Figure annexed;

Third Bed.		
John. 13. 20. 21. 22.		
	The Table.	
		Peter.
		Second Bed.
First Bed.		Matth. 26. 20.
		James. Philip. Bartho.

for though the first place in the First and Third Bed was most honourable, it was not so in the Second; but the last place in the Second Bed, which was nearest to the Master of the House, or in this Figure to our Saviour, where Peter lay — This was not only the Custom of the Jews, but of the Parthians, Persians, Greeks and Romans. According to the Description of Salustius, Servilius who lay in the place of Peter (as in the Figure) was slain at Dinner by Perenna, the Master of the Feast, (who lay where our Saviour did.) For the above Triclinial Description read Ben-maimon, that great Rabbi,

as also Sophocles, Euripides, Abenacens Mercurialis, Lipsius, &c. Juvenal and Aristotle, say something of it. The Learned conclude the first Original of Leaning and Accusation at Meals was taken from the Gymnastics, who after their Bathing retired to Bed, where they took something to refresh them.

Quest. 4. What's the reason that our Breath coming from Ore contracto, doth blow Cold, but coming from Ore dilato, doth blow warm?

Answ. The Reason of either explains both. When we breath with an open Mouth, immediately from our Lungs there is a great deal of Breath respires at once; and therefore being much, the external Air, has not power to cool it immediately; but by blowing when the Lips are almost contracted, the little Breath that is emitted, is immediately cool'd by the External Air; besides, it comes rather from the Mouth than the Lungs, which is not so hot a place. That the reason of this Change is by the outward Air, is evident, for from the same blast you'll find the nearer your Mouth, the warmer it feels.

Quest. 5. What is the Reason of those Blasts, or Trade Winds in the Indies, which blow one half the Year one way, and the other half the other?

Answ. We look upon this Question to be as difficult as any yet sent us, and the reason why we answer'd it not before now, was, that we might make our Inquiries into the Nature and Situation of those places, and other things, which consider'd, we now answer, — That the Sun is so strong and violent in the Indies, especially for half the Year, that if Nature by means of such heat did not procure a Remedy, the Place would be uninhabitable: The Remedy is this, that the heat of the Earth, and rarefaction of the Air, draw Rain from the Neighbouring Seas, as the Sun does, and also condens'd and gross Air filled with Clouds, which the Winds agitate about, are more easily discharg'd, when they find a Climate where the Air is so rarified, that it is not able to bear them up.

This perhaps may be the natural Reason, that in the Month of July, when the heat is most violent there, the Rain does certainly begin to fall, continuing six Months together, and as we are inform'd, in the hottest places they begin the soonest, as along the Coast of Coromandel, the Isle of Ceylon, which begin a Month sooner than those at Malabar, by reason the Summer begins the sooner there.

Also we are informed, that the Sea and Wind, go always the same way, the Sea flowing back again Southward about October, at which time the Northern Wlnds begins to blow.

Now this being premis'd, that heat produceth Rain, every one knows that Rain produces Winds, and then it follows, That the Winds must continue to blow one way, being compress'd by the Rain, which also continues for such a time, being for that time also drawn by Heat, which is most easily discharg'd in rarified Air.

But perhaps this may be a better reason: The Sun going towards one of the Poles, causes a Change in the direction of the Earth's Axis, and a depression in the Pole on that side, then the other Pole must needs be rais'd, and consequently the Sea and Air being two fluid Bodies, are affected with this Inclination, which also recline when the Sun returns towards the other Pole.

From this reason, (because we have had many more Questions sent us about the flux and reflux of the Sea) we shall take notice, that perhaps naturally there ought to be but two opposite fluxes of the Sea, one from the side of the Pole Artick, the other from that of the Antartique; and if there was but one continued Sea from Pole to Pole, the Fluxes would be regular as they are in the Indies, but such regularity is now hindred by interception of Land, which impede, break and vary their Course; but as these Remarks are partly grounded upon some Observations made in a Voyage to Indoßtan, so we leave them to be improved or censured by the Ingenious.

Quest. 6. Is the Earth or Water the colder Element?

Answ. The Earth and Water make up but one Globe, and therefore Naturally would be all of a Coldness. The Question is too general to have a particular Solution: Some parts of the Earth and Waters are more subject to the Power of the Sun than others, and some parts of the Earth more than others. If the Querist means here nearer home,

as the River Thames at Greenwich, and the Meadows about it; (for we can't suppose it in London, because that Trade and Houses have alter'd the Nature of the Earth:) In this last supposition we must also suppose a Foot depth at least from the Surface of both, to be free from the Effects of the Air, and then we see no absurdity in affirming an Equality of Temperature, although we grant that we shall be more sensible of the Waters cold, but that is from its fluidity and rarity, being thereby qualified to make an easier penetration into the Pores of our Bodies.

Quest. 7. Where is the Original of the River Nile, and through what places does it pass to come into Egypt?

Answ. All our Maps with Ptolomy place it a good way beyond the Equinoctial, but erroneously, if we may believe the Ingenious Monsieur Tavernier, who as his Curiosity was great in this particular, so his Aids, and the Advantages he had of satisfaction were extraordinary; his very Words (as Translated) are these — I have already said in another place, that at the time when the two Embassadors of Ethiopia were at Dehli, my Aga Danech-mend-han, who is extraordinarily curious, sent often for them, to inform himself in my Presence of the Condition and Government of their Country; and one day amongst other things we occasioned them to Discourse of the Source of the Nile, which they call Abbabile, whereof they spoke to us as a thing so known, that no body doubt of it, and where one of these Embassadors and a Mogolian that was return'd with him out of Ethiopia had been in Person; they told, that it takes its Origin in the Country of the Agaus, and issueth out of the Earth at big bubbling Springs near one another, which form a small Lake of about 30 or 40 Paces long; that at the coming out of this Lake it is then already a pretty River, and from place to place receiveth other Rivers which enlarge it: They added, that it runs bending, and forming a great Penninsole, and that after several Cassala's from steep Rocks, it falls into a great Lake, which is not above 4 or 5 days Journey from its Source in the Country of Dumbia or Dembia, 3 little days Journey from Gonder, the Metropolis from Ethiopia, thot having traversed that Lake, it issueth thence swell'd with all the Waters that fall there — passeth thro Sonnar, the principal City of the King of Funges or Babaris, Tributary to the King of Ethiopia, running on and making the Cataracts, and so entring into the Plains of Messer, which is Egypt —

Advertisements.

THE Supplement to the First Volume of the Athenian Gazette (is just now publish'd) containing the Transactions and Experiments of the Foreign Vertuoso's: As also their Ingenious Conferences upon many Nice and Curious Questions. To which is added an Account of the Design and Scope of most of the considerable Books Printed all Languages, and of the Quality of the Author, if known. The whole being a Translation of what is most rare and valuable, in the Paris Journal des Scavants, the Acta Eruditorum Lipsiae, the Universal Historical Bibliothèque, and in the New Book Entituled, En Tredius Sciences & Galanies, &c. publish'd for the improving of Natural, Moral, and Divine Knowledge, as is specified in the Preface to these Papers, and use of these Foreign Vertuoso's, which said Preface gives the Reader a full Account of this Design, — Price 1s. Sold at the Raven in the Poultry, where is to be had the First Volume of the Athenian Gazette, beginning March 17th, and ending May 30th. 1691. (or single ones to this time.)

We design to add the Contents of each Supplement to that Alphabetical Table we have promis'd at the end of every Year, that so by the help of this General Table our Querists may presently find any Question or Subject they have a mind to consult, either in our Weekly Mercuries, or Supplemental Volumes; and therefore to render our Undertaking thus serviceable to the Reader, we shall print the Supplement to each Volume of our Athenian Gazette on the same Paper with our Weekly Mercuries, that so they may bind up with 'em.

In this Supplemental Volume we have Printed that full Account of our Athenian Project which we have so often promised to the World: And that no Man may be ignorant of what our whole Undertaking is, we shall again Print the same Account in our next Saturday's Mercury.

We have received several Questions last Week that are already answer'd in our First Volume.

Many of the Ingenious Questions which we have receiv'd this Week, are answer'd in this Supplement now recited, and some of 'em are also answer'd in our First Volume.